

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A shirred tubular food casing ~~based on thermoplastic in which the thermoplastic comprises~~ comprising a blend of at least one polyamide and/or (co)polyamide and at least one hydrophilic component, ~~and wherein~~ the casing is biaxially stretch-oriented and is impregnated on the inside and/or outside with at least one component which allows the pleats of the casing to adhere to one another.
2. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1, wherein the (co)polyamide is an aliphatic (co)polyamide[[,]] ~~preferably a linear aliphatic (co)polyamide.~~
3. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the hydrophilic component is a natural and/or synthetic polymer which can take up at least 20% by weight[[,]] ~~preferably at least 40% by weight[[,]]~~ of its own weight of water.
4. (Original) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim 3, wherein the natural polymer is a polysaccharide.
5. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim[[s]] 1 to 3~~, wherein the hydrophilic component is a water-soluble synthetic polymer.
6. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in claim ~~[[4]]5~~, wherein the water-soluble synthetic polymer is a polyvinyl alcohol, a vinylpyrrolidone (co)polymer, a polyalkylene glycol, a (co)polymer containing units of N-vinylalkylamides, or a (co)polymer containing units of (meth)acrylic acid or (meth)acrylamide.

7. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 3~~, wherein the hydrophilic component is a polyether amide, polyester amide, polyether ester amide or polyamido urethane.
8. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 7~~, wherein the component used for the impregnation is a water-soluble cellulose ether[[,]] preferably methylcellulose[[,]] carboxymethylcellulose[[,]] carboxymethylhydroxyethylcellulose[[,]] hydroxyethylcellulose[[,]] methylhydroxyethylcellulose[[,]] carboxymethylcellulose Na-salt[[,]] carboxymethylhydroxyethylcellulose Na-salt[[,]] and/or a polyalkylene glycol[[,]] preferably a polyethylene glycol having a molecular weight M_n in the range 200 to 1500 or a polyalkylene glycol mono- or dialkyl ether.
9. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 8~~, wherein it is coated on the inside and/or outside with about 2 to 500 mg/m²[[,]] preferably about 20 to 250 mg/m²[[,]] particularly preferably about 50 to 150 mg/m²[[,]] of a component having adhesion properties[[,]] the component preferably comprising at least one polymer having adhesion properties.
10. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 9~~, wherein the casing is stretched in an area stretching ratio of 6 to 18[[,]] preferably 8 to 11.
11. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 10~~, wherein the casing is heat set.
12. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 11~~, wherein the casing is single layered.

13. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 12~~, wherein the wall thickness of the casing is 12 to 60 m[[,.]] ~~preferably 20 to 45 m~~.
14. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 13~~, wherein the casing can take up 10 to 50 % by weight of water, based on its dry weight.
15. (Currently Amended) The shirred food casing as claimed in ~~one or more of claim~~[[s]] 1 ~~to 14~~, wherein the shirring ratio is 80 : 1 to 500 : 1[[,.]] ~~preferably 100 : 1 to 400 : 1~~.
16. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of the shirred food casing as claimed in one or more of claims 1 to 15 as artificial sausage casing in the production of cooked meat~~ Cooked-meat sausages, and scalded-emulsion sausages, and also of small sausages ~~on fully automatic sausage stuffing and clipping apparatuses comprising the shirred food casing as claimed in claim 1.~~